

Dear Superintendent or Commissioner of Education,

Happy New Year from The National WWII Museum! We would like to take this opportunity to share some of our new educational resources and scholarship opportunities with you and the teachers and students across your state.

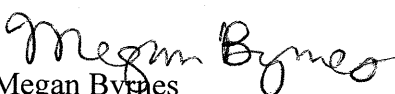
Each year, The National WWII Museum sponsors two essay contests for middle and high school students. Student participants are asked to reflect on an annual theme related to the WWII experience and to connect this to an aspect of their own lives. This year's essay prompt was inspired by a quote from Ira Hayes, one of the flag-raisers at Iwo Jima, and asks students, "How do you define a hero?"

Additional information about the Museum's **National 2015 High School Essay Contest** and **2015 Middle School Essay Contest**, including contest rules deadlines, is available on our web site at www.nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests. **High school participants have the chance to win as much as \$1,000, while middle school students can win \$250. Winning essays will also be posted on the Museum's website.** We would like to ensure that as many students in your state have the opportunity to participate as possible. Therefore, I ask that you please forward this information to the appropriate person or persons within your state.

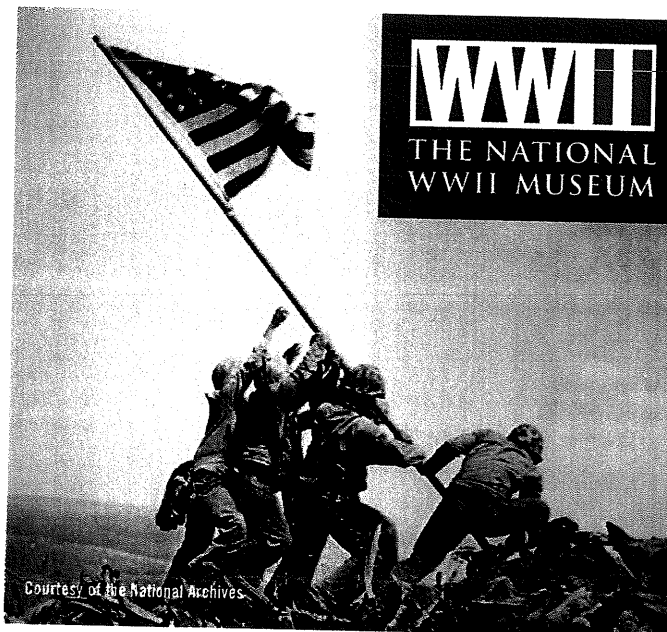
As part of our ongoing mission to tell the story of the American Experience during WWII, including the experiences of students on the Home Front, the Museum has launched a WWII yearbook web site called "See You Next Year!" High School Yearbooks from WWII." This educational resource currently contains yearbooks from at least 34 states, including a special yearbook from a Japanese American internment camp in Arkansas. More information on this web site, including suggested lesson plans for the classroom, oral history interviews, and ways to donate a yearbook from your state, can be found at www.ww2yearbooks.org. I've also included a bookmark for the site in your packet. Again, we ask you to please share this collection of primary sources with curriculum specialists and teachers across your state to use as they explore the history and lessons of WWII with America's youth.

Thank you for your time and assistance in sharing our educational opportunities and resources with teachers and students within your state. If you or your colleagues have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 504-528-1944, ext. 264, or educator@nationalww2museum.org.

Sincerely,


Megan Byrnes
K-12 Curriculum Coordinator

The War That Changed The World™



WWII
THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM

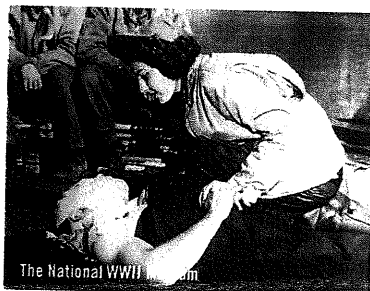
2015 Middle School ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST

HOW DO YOU DEFINE A HERO?

The flag-raising on Mount Suribachi at Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945 is one of the most famous moments of WWII. The six men who helped to raise the flag are often referred to as heroes. Out of the six men who raised the flag that day, only three survived until the end of the war. One of the surviving men, Cpl. Ira Hayes (Pima) was repeatedly asked by admirers if he considered himself to be a hero as a result of his wartime actions. Hayes replied:

"HOW COULD I FEEL LIKE A HERO WHEN ONLY FIVE MEN IN MY PLATOON OF 45 SURVIVED, WHEN ONLY 27 MEN IN MY COMPANY OF 250 MANAGED TO ESCAPE DEATH OR INJURY?"

This year, as the world remembers the 70th anniversary of this iconic event, The National WWII Museum asks students to think about what it means to be a hero.



For your essay, please address the following question: **How do you define a hero?** In your response, use WWII as a starting point and base your essay in part on America's involvement in WWII. But don't stop in the past. Use specific examples from your own experiences that support your ideas. **This is NOT a research paper.** Your essay will be judged foremost for its originality, clarity of expression, and adherence to contest theme, as well as its historical accuracy, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Museum staff will read and evaluate entries.

REQUIREMENTS:

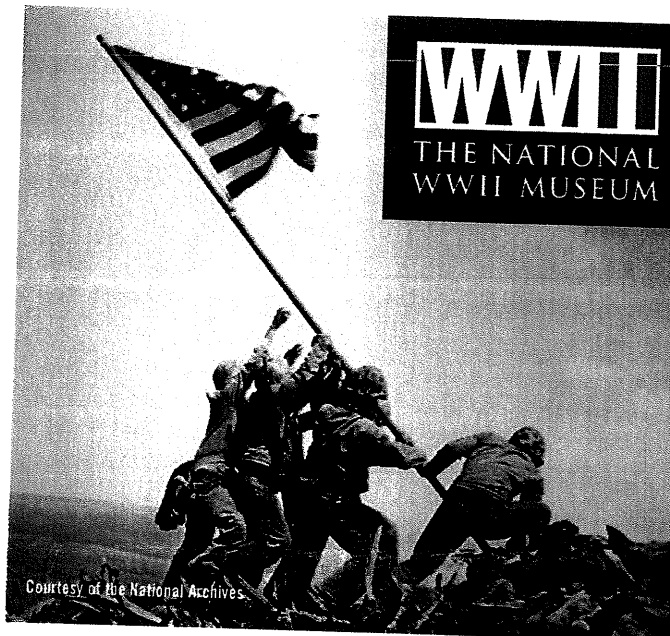
Contest is open to **all students in grades 5-8** in the United States, US territories, and US military bases. Your essay must be **500 words or less**. Only one essay per student may be submitted. The Museum will accept the first 500 properly formatted entries only. **Essays must be in Microsoft Word format only; no zip files or Google documents are permitted.** The website will indicate when we are approaching 500 submitted essays.

Essays must be submitted through nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests by **March 31, 2015, 5:00 pm CST**

AWARDS:

The Museum will select one winning essay from each grade. **Winners will receive a \$250 prize.** Three honorable mentions from each grade will receive a Museum baseball cap. Winning essays and honorable mentions will be posted on The National WWII Museum's website.

www.nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests



Courtesy of the National Archives

WWII
THE NATIONAL
WWII MUSEUM

2015 High School ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST

HOW DO YOU DEFINE A HERO?

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Cpl. Ira Hayes
Courtesy of the National Archives



The National WWII Museum

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REQUIREMENTS:

Contest is open to all high school students in the United States, US Territories, and US military bases. Your essay must be 1,000 words or less. Only one essay per student may be submitted. The Museum will accept the first 500 properly formatted entries only. **Essays must be in Word format only; no zip files or Google documents are permitted.**

The website will indicate when we are approaching 500 submitted essays.

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AWARDS:

First place: \$1,000 Second place: \$750 Third place: \$500

Winning essays will be posted on The National WWII Museum's website, along with honorable mentions.

nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests